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AT
SUFFIELD, CONN.,
DECEMBER 8, 1869.



The First Congregational Church, Suffield, Conn.

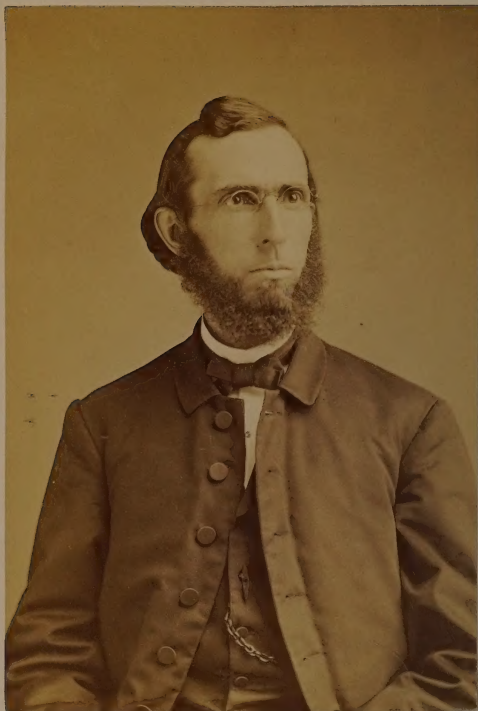
EXERCISES
OF
DEDICATION
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AT THE
First Congregational Church,

SUFFIELD, CONN.,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1869.

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Rev. Walter Barton.

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DEDICATORY SERMON.

But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth?

Second Chronicles, 6 : 18.

THE temple on Mount Zion, vast in its dimensions, costly in its materials, and resplendent in its whole appearance, was finished. The people had now met to dedicate the building to God with prayer and thanksgiving.

The king himself takes the lead in the services. Kneeling on a scaffold of burnished brass, before the sacred altar, and in the presence of the whole congregation of Israel, with outstretched hands and uplifted eyes, he offers to the God of heaven and earth the consecrating prayer.

But hardly has Solomon begun his prayer, before he seems to be overwhelmed with, not the grandeur and magnitude of the house, but the magnitude of the purpose for which it had been built.

There is a solemn pause in the prayer, and then the yet more solemn exclamation, "But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built?"

And we also, as we come to consecrate our new house of worship, are led to recall the purposes and hopes

which led us to rise up and build it. After nearly two years of patient and persevering endeavor, the work is completed, and we are gathered here to-day to present it to Him who, as we believe, moved us to prepare it, and who, we hope and pray, will accept and with his presence hallow it.

But if such our purpose, what a purpose it was! If such our prayer, what a prayer it is! May not we, too, pause in the midst of these solemnities, and allow each soul to put to itself and to God the interrogation of the text, "*But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth!*"

Great and high as this purpose appears, it is undoubtedly the true one. Soul-stirring and awe-inspiring as this expectation is, we shall endeavor to show that it is well founded.

My theme therefore is, *The Scripture Idea of the Sanctuary*. My aim will be to fasten in your minds as firmly as I may be able, this great truth, that God *will* dwell with men on the earth, and that this fact gives to every christian temple its highest honor and glory.

There always have been, and doubtless always will be, various ideas as to what a sanctuary should be. To some, it is no more significant and no more sacred than any other building. To others, it is only a place for performing certain rites and ceremonies. To yet others, the church is only a place for almost silent communion with one's own soul and with God. A fourth class would have the church directly the opposite of this, and use it only as a place for conference and mutual edification. But none of these views seem to give us the real and true idea of the christian sanctuary.

He who moves men to build Him a temple, tells them to what end He does it, namely, that He may have a visi-

ble dwelling-place where He may meet and commune with men and they with Him. This at least is the scripture idea of a sanctuary or house of worship. Let us, then, following our Saviour's rule, "Search the Scriptures," and see what they teach in regard to the subject before us.

The Patriarchs who were more or less nomadic in their mode of living, had no sanctuaries or permanent places of worship, but wherever they went they set up *altars*. These were generally built in places hallowed by religious associations: as, for instance, where God had appeared to holy men and bestowed upon them some special token of his favor. Sometimes they were erected simply as memorials, but usually for the offering of sacrifice. Noah erected an altar and worshiped God near the place where he left the ark. He seems not to have waited for any special command to prepare such an altar; and undoubtedly it was all the more pleasing to God, who "loveth a cheerful giver," that it was done "not of constraint but willingly."

Looking back upon the wonderful interposition which kept his little household safe in the midst of the awful catastrophe which swept from existence all his cotemporaries, the first and deepest desire of his heart was to express in acts of worship his devout thanksgiving to God for His preserving goodness.

The first thing we find done in the new world was an act of worship. Noah's first care was not to build an house for himself, but an altar for God.

And the other Patriarchs did the same, all along the line of their devious wanderings. And wherever they set up altars, *there to them* was the *house of God*.

Abraham's altar, which he set up at Beersheba and on Mount Moriah, was as truly a sanctuary as this.

Wherever the "father of the faithful" dwelt, there he builded an altar to the Lord.

And Jacob, when, instead of an altar, he set up only a stone pillar on which his head had rested during the previous night, said, "This stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house." The interview which God had granted him there, "in visions of the night," made it such. And on awaking he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not;" and he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place; this is none other but the *house of God* and this is the gate of heaven."

In the thoughts of Jacob that stone pillar was invested with all the sacredness of a real temple. And who can doubt that in the sight of God it was as honorable as a temple? All the wealth expended, all the art and skill displayed in Grecian or Roman architecture, never made of stones a pile more precious than Jacob's simple stone with its heavenly history.

And in all this we behold not only the antiquity of our religion, but we also learn the earliest idea and the original name of a place of worship.

The *name*, *God's house*, the *occasion*, *God's presence* with the worshiper. That rude stone was not only a figure of the tabernacle and temple afterwards to be built, but was also a shadow or symbol of that mystical but spiritual house, the church, composed of living stones, to which Saint Paul seems plainly to refer in the words, "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the *pillar* and ground of the truth." The church being the reality, the truth the substance, of which Jacob's stone pillar was the shadow.

The *Tabernacle* which succeeded the altar as God's

House was made in the wilderness of Sinai, by Moses, in accordance with a special appointment and after a special plan that God gave him in the Holy Mount. It was the first religious structure in which the Eternal One vouchsafed to dwell on the earth. It was a sort of portable temple, God's movable dwelling-place, and was not unfitly esteemed the center of the ceremonial worship.

The first mention of it is in these words, "Let them make me a *Sanctuary* that *I may dwell among them.*" And after having given directions about the form and structure of the Mercy Seat, the Lord said to Moses, "There will I *meet with* thee and I will *commune with thee* from above the Mercy Seat."

It is only when we keep this divine purpose and promise in mind that we are able to account for the multitude of rules and regulations connected with the structure and worship of this ancient tabernacle. All the persons, vessels and instruments employed in the tabernacle worship must be fitted to appear as in God's presence.

But did the high and lofty One stand in any need of such a movable habitation? Though it was a glorious structure, built in the taste of heaven, designed and reared by the inspiration of the Spirit, and consecrated by Moses, still can it be reasonably thought a meet apartment for Jehovah? "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

What is the whole universe but a vast and magnificent cathedral whose aisles, rich with the tracery of the stars, are everywhere inhabited by Deity? Heathen gods, to which Greeks and Romans erected magnificent temples, were supposed literally to dwell in them and to claim

them as their residence after they were duly dedicated. But the christian's God can be confined in no such structure, nor needs He to be housed from the scorching sun or the sweeping storm in temples made with hands. And yet in a special manner God did own the tabernacle as His residence. "Then," says Moses, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." All things having been made ready, the divine Occupant in this august manner made his solemn entry into the habitation in which He had promised to dwell.

Thus, what was mere pretense or delusion among the heathen was among the Jews a glorious and solemn reality. The object of such a structure, we must remember, was not, like that of a church now, to serve as a place of shelter for the assembled worshipers; for these were gathered not *in*, but *before* and *around* the tabernacle. There was a double design in this building, namely, as a visible palace for the King of Israel, and as a suitable center or medium of that solemn worship which the people were there to render to Him.

To the most ignorant and debased Jew, the symbolism of the tabernacle was at least witness of the nearness of the great King. By His own appointment, it was God's House. And this explains the deep reverence and strong attachment which the Jews ever manifested for it. They felt toward this sanctuary as David did toward the one that succeeded it. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" "I will abide in thy tabernacle forever."

How touching and beautiful, though sad, the scene where, while the armies of Israel are contending with the Philistines, the aged Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the *ark of God*, and

his eyes were dim that he could not see ; and when told by a messenger just from the scene of conflict that his two sons were slain and the ark of God taken — the broken-hearted and almost blind father and priest, forgetting, as it would seem, the fate of his two sons, can only think of what had befallen the ark. “And it came to pass when he made mention of the *ark of God*, that he fell from off the seat backward, and his neck brake and he died.”

To Eli, the taking of the ark from Israel was like breaking their intercourse with their covenant God.

Though the tabernacle itself has passed away, its many and sacred lessons are a part, and no small part, of that Book which is to guide us until the words of the inspired revelation are fulfilled, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The tabernacle had a future as well as a present meaning. Almost everything connected with it was in some way made a type of Christ, of the church, or of heaven. Without some general acquaintance, therefore, with the form and character of the Jewish tabernacle, it will be impossible to understand many portions of the Old and New Testaments, or to appreciate the thousand allusions to it scattered over the whole of sacred literature.

This structure was one of the most convincing answers ever given to the question in our text, and also one of the most striking types of Jesus Christ, who was “a minister of the sanctuary and of the *true tabernacle* which the Lord pitched and not man.”

But while a *movable* temple was suited to a *nomadic* people, when they became *settled*, exchanging their tents for houses, their *tabernacle* in like manner became a *fixed*

temple. As David sat in his royal house at Jerusalem, when the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, he said unto the prophet Nathan, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." He therefore purposed that the house of God should no longer be a *tent*, but a fabric of stone suited to the altered condition of the people.

The king's purpose pleased the prophet, who bade him go forward and do all that was in his heart. The plan also pleased the Lord, and He said to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have *walked* in a *tent* and in a *tabernacle*."

The place was appointed by God, the materials and the means were provided in ample abundance by David, but the house was reared by his son, because the king, his father, had been a man of war.

The plan of the temple, like that of the tabernacle, was from God. And it was erected for the same glorious end, that God might still dwell with men on the earth.

As God required that the tabernacle should be reared with costly and curious skill, and condescended even to inspire the artificers with wisdom that the workmanship might be unequalled in beauty, so He required that the temple should be made even more grand and attractive.

From the time of the building of the temple we lose sight of the tabernacle altogether. It seems to have been put on one side of the temple, as a relic. On comparing the temple with the tabernacle, we find that all the arrangements were identical, and the dimensions of every part were exactly double those of the preceding

structure. It also contained the same furniture. But the materials were more costly and durable. If, as is supposed by Bishop Cumberland, the gold and silver used for the work of constructing the tabernacle amounted to eight hundred thousand dollars, to say nothing of the cost of other materials and of the furniture, the cost of building and furnishing the temple must have been immense, amounting to millions.

The temple was seven years and six months in building, and when completed was the most gorgeous and magnificent one ever erected to the worship of Jehovah. It soared above the city in matchless splendor—the very triumph of architecture—and was called “the perfection of beauty and the joy of the whole earth.” An old divine has well said, “It seems as if God had made it his business to *build* a *Solomon* in order that Solomon might build Him a temple.”

To every truly devout Jew it was the most important spot upon earth. David but gave expression to the universal sentiment and belief of his brethren when he said, “The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.”

During the period of the theocracy, which signifies a visible representation of the reign of Jehovah, He was regarded as both God and King. The tabernacle and temple were each considered as His palace—the holy habitation of the invisible King. The laws were there delivered by Him. There he gave visible manifestations of his glory. There peace and war — questions determined under all governments by the supreme authority — were referred to Him. All idolatry and rebellion was treason. Almost every dealing of God, and every event in their national history, was from this time closely

connected with the temple. There was God to be worshipped. There were intimations of his will to be sought and obtained. There, when any had sinned or become defiled, must they go for cleansing. There, when any had mercies to acknowledge or guidance to seek, must they go to meet God, and learn His pleasure, for *God's way* was *in the sanctuary*.

When He took up His abode in it there was witnessed the same glorious display of the divine presence as was seen at the consecration of the tabernacle. The symbolic cloud that appeared at first on Mount Sinai, and afterwards rested upon Moses's tent and upon the tabernacle, now rested upon the temple. When it was dedicated to the worship of the Most High, he honored it with the Shekinah, or visible manifestation of his presence. We are told that "the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." Whilst the firmament rang with the music of cymbals, psalteries and harps, and the voices of a multitude of trained singers rose high in God's praise, there descended majestically a cloud of glory, and the Almighty took possession of his house with such overpowering tokens of approval, that the priests shrank back as though withered and overcome by the brilliant manifestation.

And after the dedication, the Lord appeared unto Solomon, and said, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication which thou hast made before me. I have hallowed this house which thou hast built to put my name there forever, and *mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually*." Oh, how could there ever be, after this, a question or doubt that God will and does dwell with men on the earth, and that He loves, the

gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob? The symbolic cloud still witnessed to the divine presence. And this, as we learn so often in the Psalms, was the temple's crowning glory. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." He shone *out* of Zion because He dwelt *in* Zion. The world, previous to the coming of Christ, had not a ray of saving light but what issued from Zion.

How dark and wretched the ancient world would have been but for the rays of light emitted upon it from that sacred spot. God's works were indeed glorious and wonderful then as now, but they needed a higher glory still, even the glory of Jehovah's perfections that shone through the temple worship and symbols upon a benighted world.

"From Egypt the world learned something of God's justice and severity against a proud and cruel king. From Mount Sinai the world learned God's holiness and majesty, and received that perfect law which was never to be abrogated. "But it was from Mount Zion that the world was to learn and behold with joy God's *mercy* and *grace*, the mild beams of which were even then transmitted to distant nations."

Zion was not only the Gospel of the Jewish church in places and things,—it was a center whence the divine communications issued forth to enlighten in some measure all the nations of the world.

How often we find the Psalmist calling upon the heathen to praise God for his greatness, his majesty and his goodness. Zion, in its worship and in its worshippers, was a witness of the one true God to all mankind.

It was the pride of Greece that from her shone forth the rays of philosophy, of poetry, of sculpture, of eloquence. Let her take due credit for these; but let it

not be forgotten that from her also issued the shame of filthy and abominable idolatries. In the days of Paul, it was "easier to find in Athens a god than a man."

But from the temple on Mount Zion shone forth the perfections of the only true God, and those ordinances which were the emblems of a brighter economy which should ere long be published to the world.

The true idea of the sanctuary may also be gathered from the words of Christ. To Him, as to David, the temple was God's house. At one time He calls it "My Father's house;" at another, "My house." And how expressive and decisive, as to the subject before us, our Lord's words, "Whoso shall swear by the temple, swear-eth by it," and by what else? By the imposing rites performed there, or by the splendid music, and the great gatherings held here? No, but by it, "and by *Him that dwelleth therein.*"

Like the tabernacle, the temple also was a type of heaven. To the almost countless number of apartments into which the temple was disposed, our Saviour refers in those words so full of comfort to his sorrowing disciples, "In My Father's house are *many mansions.*"

The imagery is singularly beautiful and happy when considered as an allusion to the temple, which our Lord not unfrequently called his Father's house. It pointed forward and upward to the blest seats and the many mansions of the New Jerusalem which Christ is preparing for the final and eternal home of all his children.

How sad, then, to think that this mighty and magnificent structure — crowned with the divine presence and glory — hallowed by such a ritual and worship — renowned by such great and imposing assemblies — sacred by ten thousand memories, and by the highest

aspirations and tenderest associations of the human soul, — must pass away!

Who wonders that the disciples were amazed when they heard their Master say of the buildings of the temple, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

The disciples had often contemplated it with wonder and admiration, as the grandest or the only sanctuary upon earth. The marble of the Herodian temple, which they were then gazing upon, was so white that at a distance it appeared like a mountain of snow, and the spikes of gold upon the top, and the plates of gold upon the sides, reflected so strong and dazzling an effulgence, that the eye could no more bear it than it could bear the splendor of the sun.

But the conditions upon which God had promised to dwell there not being kept, the divine presence and glory were withdrawn, and the temple, turned into a den of thieves by man, and forsaken of God, became a proverb and a by-word among all nations. When Christ went out of the temple for the last time, He left it a *spiritual* ruin, and before that generation had passed away it was made by the Romans a *literal* ruin. But what now shall take the place of the altar, tabernacle and temple, as God's house?

All these dispensations seem to have been introductory and preparatory. The *visible* glory of Israel has departed. Those *shadows* of good things have vanished, but the *substance* remains. All through the Old Testament dispensation, the question, "Will God dwell with men on the earth?" was answered by reference to the tabernacle and temple. But when these, having fulfilled their mission, were removed, the same question was finally and forever settled by the coming of Christ.

“In *Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” He was the Great Revealer of God to man; hence his name *Emmanuel*.

Therefore, Zion of old “had no glory by reason of the glory that excelled.”

There was nothing in the Jewish economy which had its seat on Mount Zion that could make the worshipers or “the comers thereunto perfect.”

It is true, a great advance had been made toward perfection; but when Christ the substance of all the types appeared, those types were removed. Even Saint Paul called the ancient ceremonial worship a yoke and a burden, which was too expensive, painful and oppressive to be borne. And we find that before the temple service had passed away there was such a *looking and longing for something better* that *synagogues* began to be erected. Just when these places of worship began to be built is unknown. During the Babylonish captivity, the Jews, who were then deprived of their customary religious privileges, were wont to collect around some prophet or other pious man, who taught them and their children in religion, exhorted to good conduct, and read out of the sacred books. These assemblies, or meetings, became, in progress of time, fixed in certain places, and a regular order was observed in them. Such appears to have been the origin of *synagogues*.

The *Temple* was a *single building*, which the Jews were forbidden to multiply, it being designed as a *center of union* to the *whole nation*, as well as the immediate seat of the divine presence, which was confined to that spot.

It was eminently adapted to prevent innovations in the solemnities of religion.

But the Jewish *synagogues*, which might be built at

pleasure, and soon were spread over the whole land, were equally and even more calculated to increase personal piety, to keep the people from relapsing into idolatry, and to perpetuate in their minds the knowledge of revealed truth. Not *Moses* only, but the *Prophets* were read in them every Sabbath day; and thus the Messianic hopes of Israel were universally diffused. The simple, edifying devotion in which mind and heart could alike enter, in these unpretending sanctuaries, would be better fitted to attract the heathen proselytes who might have been repelled by the bloody sacrifices of the temple.

The size of the Synagogue varied with the population to be accommodated. So far as we can now learn, there were no fixed laws of proportion for its dimensions, like those which are traced in the the tabernacle and temple. Its position, however, was determinate. It stood, if possible, on the highest ground, in or near the village or city to which it belonged. Where an elevated place could not be had, a tall pole rose from the roof to render it conspicuous.

Its direction was so fixed that the worshipers, as they entered and as they prayed, looked toward Jerusalem.

The practice of a fixed direction in prayer is often alluded to in the Old Testament. It is seen often in the Psalms, and appears as a fixed rule in the devotions of Daniel. His chamber windows by which he was accustomed to pray three times a day, opened toward Jerusalem. That this was the direction of Jewish devotion is recognized in the dedication prayer of Solomon. God was entreated to hear not only the prayers of his people but also the supplications of strangers made *toward* the city which He had chosen and *toward* the house built for His name.

When a synagogue building was finished, it was set

apart, as the temple had been, by a special prayer of dedication. Thenceforth it had a sacred character. The common acts of life, eating, drinking, reckoning up accounts, were forbidden in it. No one might pass through it as a short cut. And when it was no longer used for worship, the building might not be applied to any base purpose.

Our Lord shows what a high estimate He placed upon these synagogues, which in his day were very numerous at Jerusalem and throughout Judea, by worshiping in them in his youth and in his manhood, by teaching there some of the most glorious truths, and by working in them some of his mightiest miracles. Luke tells us that it was Christ's custom to go into them on the Sabbath day. And He himself said, "I ever taught in the synagogue."

I have dwelt thus at some length upon the sanctuary that succeeded or supplied, in some measure, the place of the temple, because of the great resemblance as to structure and worship between those ancient synagogues and the edifices built for christian worship from the apostolic days downward.

The platform of the early christian Church was evidently framed on the plan of the synagogue worship, as that was upon the statelier liturgy of the temple. The Scriptures were read and interpreted in both, which was the origin of preaching. Prayers were offered, exhortations were given and songs were sung. Each was governed by a council of elders, over which one presided which gave rise to the title of *bishops*.

Attention was paid to both doctrine and discipline. Indeed, so striking was the resemblance between the early christian assemblies and synagogues that they are sometimes used in scripture as synonymous terms. Nor

is this strange, since the first converts to christianity, who were generally Jews, would naturally adopt, so far as the Spirit of God would allow, the usages and forms to which they had so long been accustomed.

Thus, from the very beginning of religious worship, Jehovah was silently and slowly, but surely, preparing the Church and the world for those sublime utterances of His Son: "The hour cometh and now is when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

No longer is Jerusalem to be the only place where men can worship. The veil is rent in twain. Jehovah is no longer to be esteemed the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. The visible Shekinah is gone, but the Holy Spirit is come in its place, so that in every place and nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness shall be held as an accepted worshiper.

Wherever the Gospel is preached, and men come together, saying, with those Greeks of old, "We would see Jesus," we would worship God, whether it be in cabin or cathedral, in tent or temple, there is the royal saying of Christ fulfilled, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there *am I* in the midst of them." And this is the crowning glory of every christian sanctuary, the special and promised presence of Christ there. This makes such a place the House of God.

Thus we have seen how from the earliest times God required that suitable places should be erected and consecrated to His worship. If we hold that the whole world is God's temple, and in a sense holy, we may still believe that in this vast and grand edifice there are spots, each of which may serve as a "holy of holies."

Such places were the altar, the tabernacle, the temple, each of which constituted a never-to-be-forgotten demonstration of the favor with which God regards places devoted to his worship.

He might have accomplished his purpose of saving a multitude which no man could number, by such a call and by such communications as He made to the "father of the faithful," when He blessed him; but such was not his plan. It pleased Him to establish the Church, and to make that the instrumental medium by which the kingdom of darkness shall be ultimately and utterly overthrown. "The Lord shall send forth the *rod of his strength out of Zion, whereby the people shall be made willing in the day of his power.*" "Out of Zion" the Lord still shines. The church edifice, builded with strength, adorned with grace and beauty, and by its spire pointing away from sordid deeds and grovelling desires to the pure and peaceful heavens, is an object of desire and love to every devout heart. Its existence in some form is an almost indispensable requisite for the existence, stability and efficiency of the associated body of believers—that *living* house which is God's real abode.

In deciding what form shall be chosen, what style of architecture shall be adopted, we shall find it safe and wise to remember what is the true idea of the Sanctuary as revealed in Scripture, and also that God requires "according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not."

If we can only worship in a structure that corresponds to the rude cabins of our forefathers, that is all the Lord requires. But as our ability increases He requires something more.

The Puritans built such houses as they could for the

time, and when richer, built larger and better ones. They patterned after the primitive christians. They felt, as I hope we do, that a house built to gratify pride, or to keep up appearances, or for show — must excite divine pity, if not divine anger.

They believed, as every christian should, that the real power and value of all acceptable worship arises from the love and devotion that prompt it.

It always shows a mean and sordid soul or society that keeps the best for itself and gives the cheapest and poorest to God.

When David thought to build an house for the Lord, he said, "It must be exceeding magnificent." And such a house God had given him the means to build. So should men now aim to make their houses of worship convenient, tasteful and attractive, according to the means placed in their power.

The essential and shaping idea in the construction of houses of worship will ever be the convenience and comfort of the worshipers, that they may reverently and happily "sit together in heavenly places" in Christ Jesus, and may receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls.

When the corner stone of this new church was laid, the Society were exhorted to build it worthy of Him who will be worshiped in the beauty of holiness,—to build it worthy of this charming and beautiful town — to build it worthy of their ample resources and the bounties of God's providence — to build it as a tribute of respect and veneration to the christian worth and works of their fathers, and as the best legacy they could leave to their children — to build it as a memorial to tell all who look upon it or worship in it that God still

dwells with men on the earth. And thus, as any and all can see, they have built it.

It was surely appropriate that the Old Congregational Church should take this forward step in church architecture. It was the first church organized in the town, and for nearly a hundred years the only church. All the other churches have sprung from this. Its history runs parallel with the history of the town, whose two hundredth anniversary occurs next year.

Such as our new temple is, we come to-day to lay it as a willing offering before God. The gift we have prepared we here and now present and pledge to the Lord. From the first day of the enterprise until now He has blessed us. We have felt that his quickening and encouraging promise to his people in rebuilding the temple was fulfilled to us: "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." Like the Jews under Nehemiah, the people have had a mind to work and a heart to give. They have showed themselves worthy descendants of those Puritans who seem to have had a horror of the idea of worshiping God in a mortgaged meeting-house, and so they put their hands into their pockets a little deeper and paid for the building before it was dedicated.

The men have given most nobly; and the women, as in the building of the tabernacle, have been as earnest and forward as the men, ready to work, willing to give. As the well-being and happiness of woman is in a special manner vitally involved in the existence and maintenance of religious institutions, she *should* be ever earnest and active in the work of building and beautifying the house of God.

We thankfully acknowledge God's goodness in suffering no accident to befall the workmen or the work, and in his giving them skill, patience and fidelity in per-

forming their several tasks. We are glad to see so many of them present with us to-day.

The humblest workman on these walls cannot help rejoicing that he had some part in so noble a work. As President Lincoln said at Gettysburg, "Posterity will little note nor long remember what we *say* here, but what these soldiers *did* here will never be forgotten;" so may we say of those patient and faithful workmen whose hands have reared this goodly temple. Our words will pass away with the occasion that called them forth, but your work will abide and be admired for many years.

In one of the grandest of human temples, St. Paul's, in London, the following inscription is engraven on the monument to its illustrious architect: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspecte." (If a monument you seek, look around.) And so can Mr. Mead, our architect, say to any and all who desire a proof of his taste, labor and skill, Enter here, and look around.

If this be his *first* attempt at church building, what will his *last* be? This Society, of which he is a member (as were also the architects of two churches built here previously), will not, I'm sure, forget to render him his proper *meed* of praise.

And now it only remains for the members of this Church and Society to let their hearts be carried over with their gift — that the Lord may say unto them, "*Ye are the temple of the living God.*" What a thought for the Christian! And Oh, what a thought for any man, even the chiefest of sinners, that he may, if he will humble himself as did the publican, lay his hand upon his hard and icy heart, and say, "*This stone shall be God's house.*" Shall not some hitherto unloving heart be thus dedicated to God here to-day?

Only let the Spiritual temple within us rise in strength and beauty, then the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us, and the work of our hands shall be established.

Since God now virtually says of this new temple, "Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually," let us ever delight to meet Him here. And let us always come hither in full sympathy with him who sang with all the simplicity and sweetness of a child, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, whither the tribes go up to give thanks unto the name of the Lord."

What scene in the whole history of ancient Israel is more delightful, impressive or instructive, than that presented when they came up joyfully yet reverently from all parts of their country to worship in Zion, and to praise God in the mountain of his holiness! So now; the very act of our assembling is instructive, impressive, suggestive, the most so perhaps of any scene ever witnessed in a New England village. This worship is repeated Sabbath after Sabbath and year after year, by individuals and families; and the aggregate influence of such a practice has made New England the holiest, happiest and brightest spot on the face of the earth. As those who built the ancient synagogues were wont to select the most elevated places for them, so our fathers were wont to do. And there was a manifest fitness in it; for above all other institutions (the family excepted) for elevating, educating and blessing our people, the meeting-house stands pre-eminent. And it all arises from the fact that the institution of worship is God-given and God-blest. Everywhere and evermore men become like the gods they worship. "They that bow down to them become like unto them."

“These temples of His grace,
 How beautiful they stand,—
 The honors of our native place,
 And bulwarks of our land.”

Remember, that as often as these doors are opened for divine worship, God and angels wait around to see what treatment the Gospel shall receive from you. While weeks revolve, and Sabbath succeeds Sabbath, your immortal natures will be developing. This day and this hour are the preacher's words proving “a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.”

We do not dispute that you may read more entertaining, elaborate and eloquent sermons at home. But still “*God's way is in the Sanctuary.*” Still it pleases Him, “by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

This always has been, and unless we are to have a new revelation always will be, the grand instrumentality in building up the Redeemer's kingdom, both in the conversion of sinners and in carrying them forward to final salvation. And when we say this we magnify not ourselves but our office. The great difference between a preached and a printed sermon lies in this,—the one is God's ordinance, the other not.

I cannot tell, my hearers, how it is that when a man stands in the pulpit and holds up the Cross of Christ, a divine power reaches the audience, humbling their pride, bowing their wills and melting their hearts. But how often has it been so! One hundred and twenty-eight years and five months ago this very day, not three miles from where we now are, was preached Jonathan Edwards' celebrated sermon, “Sinners in the hands of an angry God.” While he was preaching it, laying bare the hearts of his hearers and pouring into their con-

sciences the living truth of the living God, they felt as we may almost imagine sinners to feel at the judgment. It is said that some arose to their feet, and caught hold of the church pillars; some clung to the backs of the pews, others called out to the preacher to "stop," and the minister in the pulpit with him caught hold of him, crying "Mr. Edwards, Mr. Edwards, is n't God a God of mercy too?"

Give that sermon, as it is now *printed*, to the skeptic, the infidel or the unbeliever, and give him also its real impressions on the audience that heard it, and ask him to explain it. Explanation there is none, save that suggested by the subject now considered — God was in very deed dwelling with men on the earth and making his own words, as they fell from the lips of his minister, "like the fire and the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." Even so does God often show now that his way is in the sanctuary.

His divine Spirit goes with the message, inspires the minister, melts the hearer, and converts his soul. Come hither, then, as worshipers, and not as critics. Come, thinking less of human instrumentalities and more of the presence and power divine.

Coming with any other motives you will give too low a place to sermons and sacraments. They are imperfect all, but are they not for that very reason wisely chosen to exalt the grace of God?

While we therefore justly rejoice in our goodly temple, in its strength and beauty, in its comfortable seats and its beautiful and excellent organ, in its convenient lecture room and commodious parlors, let us so use all these appliances for christian worship and service that we may ever feel that "the best of all is, God is with us." And

by his dwelling with us on earth may we all be fitted to dwell with Him in heaven.

And may God's ambassadors who stand here, realize their privilege and their responsibility, that there is no privilege higher and no responsibility greater than theirs. There is no such throne in the world as he fills who stands from Sabbath to Sabbath in the chamber of men's thoughts, imaginations and affections, seeking to mould them according to the everlasting Law of Sinai and the everlasting Gospel of Calvary. And may the words of Jesus be always uttered here in the spirit of Jesus. May the whole counsel of God as it bears upon all man's interests, duties and relations for this life and for the life to come, be ever proclaimed here in a *bold* but *brotherly* way.

And now, in the name of the Master, we open wide these doors, and bid all a hearty welcome to the privileges and blessings of this new Sanctuary. We laid the corner stone in the interest of Our Congregational Order, but in cordial fellowship with all "who are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." We therefore have not one word to-day to persuade those who for any reasons prefer to worship in other churches, to come to us. They are provided for, and we seek them not. But for any and for all among us who have no place, no home, in the house of the Lord, and who still need, as we do, the priceless blessings of the "common salvation," we extend our earnest and cordial welcome. The poor, I believe, will be glad to see our wealthy men doing so well by religion, and especially when they understand, as we wish them to, that this house was built for them as well as for the rich. Here may "the rich and the poor meet together," and remember that the Lord is the

Maker of them all. Evermore may this house of God be like the heart of God, open and free to all.

And may the glory of this latter house surpass all others that have preceded it, not merely in outward splendor, but in the overshadowing and in-dwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. And to every worshiper here to-day, and in all the coming years, may this place be "none other but the House of God and the Gate of Heaven."

PRAYER OF DEDICATION,

BY

REV. W. L. GAGE, OF HARTFORD, CONN.

WE thank Thee, O Lord, our Heavenly Father, that thou hast not only made us capable of worshiping Thee, but that Thou hast enriched us with affections which cling to the places where we speak Thy name and render Thee our homage. We bless Thee, O Lord, for that holy power within our blessed faith which can sanctify all the common materials out of which we build the temple of God, and make them no longer common but choice and precious. And though this house is made of wood and clay and stone and iron, yet it is built of higher and better things than these; and all are so tempered together, and interpenetrated with God's spirit, that we think of this house as no longer built with untempered mortar, but hallowed through and through. We lay it before Thee, O God, in all its grace, convenience and beauty,—in all its comfortable proportions,—in all its uses,—in all its great designs. It is a simple house, compared with the home of Thy glory in the heavens; and yet, Lord, because it has been built with something of sacrifice, and with something of a desire to give a worthy offering to the Lord, we beg Thee to take and hallow it by making Thy abode in it. We are truly thankful that we can make it over to Thee without any reservation: no human obstructions stand in the way of

its becoming, this very hour, the holy possession of God. And Thine it is, and shall be, O Heavenly Father, from the foundation stones to the loftiest pinnacle which gleams in the morning sunlight. And we rejoice, O Lord, that we can dedicate this house to-day to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; — that in all the changes of time and in all the transformations of history, the God of the fathers is worshiped on this hill top in the old words and in the old way and in the old spirit. We look back to the time when the good men of the past planted this Church: we think how simple was their life, how rude their dwellings, how plain their fare; we see the wonderful changes which have come over the life and manners and habits of their children's children; but we bless Thee that their faith in God is the same, its symbols, expressions, meaning, all unchanged. And we pray that so long as this beautiful church, with its strong and sure walls, shall stand, that faith may be loved and cherished and protected, and handed down, not as a dim tradition, but as a precious trust, from generation to generation.

And now, O God, we solemnly dedicate this house to Thee. From this moment, O Lord, it is Thine,—Thine from top-stone to base. O Father, enter in and dwell with this Thy people. Bless Thy house by filling it with Thine own glory. Inhabit not alone the outward structure, but take up Thine abode again in the hearts of this people. Accept this house not because of the gift, but of the giving, which is greater than the gift. And so long as these walls shall stand, do not forsake this house, nor this hill-side, but let Thy glory shine around this temple from age to age.

And unto Thine adorable name, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, shall be all the glory, world without end. Amen.

DEDICATION HYMN;

BY REV. SAMUEL WOLCOTT, D. D., CLEVELAND, OHIO.

I.

This temple, Holy Lord, is Thine;
Its strength and beauty are Thine own;
These courts we throng with praise divine,
And lift our homage to Thy throne.

II.

Thy cov'nant was our fathers' trust,
God of the faithful and the free!
Devoutly, o'er their sleeping dust,
Our sacred tribute swells to Thee.

III.

We consecrate again this ground,
And crown afresh the hallowed sod;
Still, from this height, abroad shall sound
The Sabbath call to worship God.

IV.

The old and young shall hither flock;
Here happy households join in prayer;
The joyful saints here praise their Rock;
The burdened cast on Christ their care.

V.

And when the house we enter glad,
Shall miss our presence and our praise,
In Zion's courts, with beauty clad,
The song immortal shall we raise.

CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS,

BY

REV. S. G. BUCKINGHAM, D. D., OF SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

WE are accustomed to congratulate our friends upon any event of great importance or interest to them,—such as a happy marriage, the birth of a child, the inheritance of a fortune, some successful enterprise, or heroic achievement. And when it has been the result of great exertion, or much patience, or rare self-sacrifice, or strenuous and long-continued exertion, we join commendation to congratulation, and say, “Well done,” as well as, “We rejoice with you in your joy.”

To congratulate you is to express sympathy in your joy.

We are your Brethren in Christ, members of the same body, the Church, and belonging to the same branch of that Church; your prosperity is ours, just as your adversity concerns us. If we hear that God is prospering you, that He is uniting your hearts as his people in love and christian service, that He is causing you to grow in piety and abound in christian usefulness, and especially that He is reviving his work among you, and gathering immortal souls into his kingdom through your prayers and labors,—we feel as if a portion of the blessing was ours, as it truly is, since we are “all one in Christ Jesus.” And should we know of declension and

division and backsliding and desolation here, it would be much as if our own vineyard had been laid waste.

Besides, we are your neighbors; we can see your temple crowning this hill-top far up and down this valley, and when the setting sun falls on its spire, and is reflected in golden glory from its windows, we shall think of you, and point out this sanctuary to our friends, and be likely to tell of your estimate of christian privileges, and liberality in providing them, as an example to the rest of us.

But why are you to be congratulated on this occasion? What have you done? What has happened, that your neighbors and christian friends should gather in such numbers, on this wintry day, to express their joy and mingle their thanksgivings with yours?

Another temple has been reared to the worship of Jehovah, the only living and true God. Another christian sanctuary has been erected where the Gospel of Salvation will be preached, and men taught to trust in and love and serve the Saviour who redeemed them. It is a convenient and beautiful structure,—suitable for the purpose so far as one built with human hands can be,—the best building in the town, as the Church ought to be,—and will stand for generations, a monument of your regard for Christianity, and of your estimation of religious privileges. And when your children and children's children shall worship in it, it shall be with veneration for your piety, and with gratitude for the faith and institutions and sanctuary which you handed down to them.

You have provided a Religious Home for those in this community who feel the need of it and shall choose to avail themselves of its privileges and refreshment. The ignorant will here be instructed and taught by Him

“who spake as never man spake.” The sinning will be here admonished, and some of them be led to forsake their evil ways and live. The weary and the heavy-laden will find rest here, the rest which only the Saviour gives to such souls. The afflicted and sad will here be comforted; the widow and the orphan find hope and help in God; and the conscience-smitten and despairing sinner, see on that Cross “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Here you will profess your faith in Christ, and take your stand publicly on his side, as against the world. Here you will bring your children for Baptism, and enter into covenant with a covenant-keeping God in their behalf. Here your young people will be joined in Marriage, and enter upon life with a new sense of its sanctity, and go forth to share each other's lot with a purer love and a tenderer sympathy and hopes that no earthly changes can disturb. And here too you will bring your Dead, to pay them the last tribute of respect and tenderness, and assuage your own grief by the hopes of a resurrection, an immortality, and a Heaven of perfect purity and felicity which the Gospel holds out to you.

When your children shall have been scattered over the land and over the world, they will look back with hallowed memories to this Home of their piety, and with tender hearts and moistened eyes recall the words that fell from that desk, the prayers that went up from those lips, the sweet strains that echoed from these walls, and bless you for such memories. And some, in death, will remember the Saviour they heard preached here, and perhaps trust in Him then, whom all their lives they had despised. From heaven even the saints may look down upon this Home of their piety, where it was born and kept alive and nurtured, and sing sweeter praise and

louder hallelujahs for the grace that gathered them here and here converted them from their sins, and made them the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Even the Lord Himself will not forget this Sanctuary, for when He reckons up his saints he will remember this as the birthplace of some of them; for the Lord shall count when He "writeth up his people, that this man was born there."

Think, too, what the erection of this sanctuary will have done for you as a church and people. It has drawn out the best and noblest feelings of your hearts. It has resulted in a liberality and harmony and enthusiasm which is worth more to this Town, in all its interests, than any number of thousands of dollars. Indeed, it is one of the wonders of this New Land, that with no aid from the government, and with no national ecclesiastical establishment, we can build so many churches and provide so well for the religious wants of the community. When that English Delegation came over here a few years ago to attend the Congregational Council, nothing seemed to surprise them so much, as the number of churches which the voluntary principle had gathered, and the number of church edifices which it had erected; and they speak in their report of the score or more of spires which they could count, within sight from one and another eminence. This is what you have done for the spiritual welfare of this community. Feeling the need of public worship and preaching, and the countless good influences of the House of God which, like the waters Ezekiel saw flowing out from underneath the temple, make the land fertile, and are life-giving to every portion of the land where they come, you have reared this temple and made it convenient and beautiful, and done it at great cost, and then consecrated it to God, and given it out-

right to this community, to be used by them and by those who shall come after them, for such purposes. And this is no mean gift; this is no ordinary liberality. Nothing but your high estimate of Christianity would have led you to do it. It is only a christian public sentiment, a high appreciation of the Gospel and its influences, a love for Christ, and love for those whom Christ has redeemed and would save, that does such work and makes such sacrifices for such an object. It has been nobly done, and right well do you deserve not only our congratulations but our commendations.

And you may expect God to bless you for it. You may expect Him to make of this a better community,—to make of you a more intelligent and christian people,—to make your families purer, lovelier and happier,—to send out your sons and daughters into the world, to be a greater blessing to it,—and to add to the inhabitants of heaven, and to his own glory, through the instrumentality of this your gift. “With such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Nothing we do for Him is ever lost. He will reward it, if not now, at the last day. But we see you blessed already in the very exercise of your christian benevolence and liberality; and this is the happiest day, probably, this Church ever saw. And we expect to see a new impulse given to your piety and to all your christian work. We shall expect your families to love the sanctuary better, and to be more regular and interested in their attendance upon it. And we shall hope to hear of the bestowal of God’s Spirit, and a work of grace, and the conversion of many sinners, and the spiritual refreshment of all his people. Then, surely, you will not regret all that you have done for Him and for his cause.

It is only too little for One who has done so much for us, and Who redeemed us with the gift of his own Son.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as with a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

INSTALLATION SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION OF REV. WALTER BARTON AS PASTOR OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SUFFIELD, CONN.

BY RICHARD GLEASON GREENE,

MINISTER OF THE NORTH CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

"Let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him."

MATT. xxvii: 42.

To worldly eyes this would seem a not unreasonable requirement. Why should the Son of God, the King of Israel, be found upon the cross? Had He not announced Himself as Saviour? But what saviour is he who cannot save himself? Was not He the Prince of Life? How then shall He bow his head in death? He had said, "I am the Son of God;" certainly then, the Father Almighty will not suffer his own, his only-begotten Son to sink out of life in the disgraceful agonies of the Cross. Even the disciples, half spiritual and half scared out of their little faith, gazing from afar upon their Master hanging between earth and heaven, may almost have looked to see Him pause in his self-sacrifice before it should have reached its supreme point, — and, beckoning to the heaven with his wonder-working hand, call legions of angels to his side, whose wings should flash an awful glory through the unnatural darkness, while the cross changed into the sudden likeness of a throne, and Golgotha into a mountain of worship, and jeers and scoffs into tumultuous praise. Putting ourselves in the place of the passers-by — as ignorant as

they, as prejudiced as they who reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross;"—or in the place of the scribes and elders and chief priests, so haughty, so self-sufficient, who cried, "Let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him,"—can we not feel that had *we* been there, unhelped of some special grace of God, we should have been in the clutch of the same temptation and in risk of the same mad guilt as they?

The Jewish utterance in the text was the utterance of this world's usual logic; in it we hear the key-note of the worldly thought about Christ and his death, from that day to this. Over against it in solemn, everlasting protest stands the rough and bloody cross with its mysterious Victim suffering to the last.

What if the Son of God had used his power, and, descending from the cursed tree, had saved Himself the last and bitterest ignominy, putting away from his innocent lips the cup of sacrifice before He had drained it to its dregs? The arrogant Jews might have hailed Him with acclamations as their King; the mob of Jerusalem, struck into a frenzy of popular admiration, might have borne Him to the temple and enthroned Him there as the Messiah; his name wafted to the imperial Court at Rome on the wave of such a miracle, might have been inscribed in the Pantheon—one more god upon Olympus, with one more altar of man's unhallowed worship—a new god like all the others, mighty to deliver himself, and to seek his own pleasure and exaltation. But what then? Was *this* what the world needed? Had not man gods enough already of this self-seeking, self-saving, self-aggrandizing sort? Was not man fully a god of this sort unto himself? What heart *then*, in poverty, in misery, in the helplessness and the hopelessness of sin, or

passing under the shadow of death — longing for a God tender enough to pity its woes, mighty enough to *bear* its great burdens, holy enough to be able to forgive its deep guilt — would have found *that* God in this Jesus whose character after all was plainly that of all other men and of the pagan deities, aiming at himself, living for himself, making himself secure in an easy splendor? Had the Lord Jesus yielded to that temptation of the devil which voiced itself in this outcry of the scribes, “Let Him now come down from the cross!” He would therein have yielded his very divinity; for his divineness was in that completeness of his self-sacrifice by which He emptied Himself utterly that He might fill others with wealth.

To-day, this ancient Jewish cry is rising from men as they crowd in wonder round the cross. It is on their lips, or it is in their hearts. “The offence of the cross” has not ceased. Still is the Crucified Christ a “stumbling-block” and a “foolishness.”

Thus we may hear a boastful *Philosophy* making the requirement in our text. Coming with air of dignity to see what draws the vulgar crowd around this Calvary, it catches sight of Jesus, and exclaims, “Ah! yes; the Nazarene; a good man in his way; indeed, for one who knew nothing of philosophy, perhaps the very best man I ever saw. Plato even could not have figured a finer ideal of the human than this young man whose talks in the temple and teachings in the streets and fields, and merciful deeds, I have noted and admired. Yet, he cannot be what he claims, so powerful and divinely high in nature, so mighty as a Saviour, or he would not suffer men to treat him thus vilely. He seems a very good and rare sort of man, but an insufficient and beggarly sort of a God. I enroll him on my long list of teachers

and martyrs." Philosophy passes on, and *Elegance* and *Culture* draw near: "What criminal is this? He seems most low and vile, dying such disgraceful death; yet on the cross, above his head, his title reads, 'This is the King of the Jews.' This, then, is he who proclaimed himself the Saviour sent from God; fine saviour, indeed, who cannot save himself from such a shame. This shows how low it is possible for the uncultivated to descend in their beliefs; they say that there are fishermen, and women of the lower ranks, and such like fools and ignorant, who actually believe this man to be their Saviour and the Saviour of the world. If now, he were aught but a low impostor, if he *had* divine power, how splendidly he might prove it and commend himself to the upper classes and our best society, by quitting his shameful cross, and taking victory and dignity to himself." In our day too, as on that old Crucifixion Day, *Pride* stalks by Calvary, counting it an insult to the dignity of human nature and the excellence of the human character that such a victim should be called man's Saviour, deeming it the height of absurdity and arrogance to ask the world to trust itself for enlightenment and salvation to one crucified between two thieves. The *Self-Indulgence* and all the practical ungodliness that are in the hearts of men, give their verdict in the same direction; for men feel and know to-day that Christ's sacrifice means *their* sacrifice also in response; that any follower of the Crucified must be ready to crucify the evil that is in him, and to offer his very self even as the Lord made offering of Himself; that faith in such a Being and in such a work, cuts up by the root all their self-indulgence, casts out their practical ungodliness, compels them to the profoundest self-denial, and orders a renewal of their whole character, a reversal of their inmost life.

It is thus that the world's wisdom denies the Cross of Jesus as the scene of any *divine* self-sacrifice; that a false refinement and a deformed culture, while they cannot gainsay an æsthetic and even a moral beauty in Christ's character and life, cast contempt on all the sacred meaning of his Cross, reducing it to a mere incident of martyrdom; that Philosophy scoffs at, and Selfishness refuses, a Son of God who is also "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Hence arise systems of theology, and what is worse than any theology, modes of habitual feeling and action from which the Saviour *crucified* is left out as a degradation and an offense. Now in the face of all this demand that the Lord shall come down from his Cross that men may worship Him — this demand for a conception of God more dignified and glorious — it is for us, Beloved, to declare with a faith cheerful and serene, that Jesus throned on Calvary is infinitely more worshipful and august in glory, more evidently *divine* than any of the world's favorite conceptions and ideals of Deity. The Church of Christ, and every man, woman and child therein, has it for its work to stand in the world's most public places of life and influence, and before the highest court of human thought, in everlasting attitude of testimony to *this* ideal of God as not only carrying the sole possibility of salvation for man, but as also in itself the grandest and most exalted which it is possible for the mind now to receive. This vision of the interior and consummate beauty of self-sacrifice, hidden in all ages from the worldly wise and great, is yet revealed in our day, as in every age, to all who are taught of the Spirit of God. The Church, following Saint Paul and all the Apostles, magnifies Him "Who being in the form of God," "made Himself of no reputation," and "became obedient unto death, even the death

of the Cross." Who undertakes to say that such a presentation of God is incongruous with the Divine Being? What! Shall it be called noble and grand for a *man* to give himself for others' good; for the patriot to languish in chains, or to cast his life on the fierce altar-fires of battle, if thereby he can save his country; for friend to give his blood for friend; for the mother to wear out her strength and yield her life itself in loving care for her offspring — shall the admiration of such deeds thrill all hearts, and throb through all the air of society and through all the space of history, and fashion the poesy of all time, and breathe itself forth in all loftiest forms of art — shall man, child of yesterday, poor, weak, sinful, possess and use this power of self-devotion in behalf of others, and yet there be no such element nor deed in God; no room in his Immensity for self-sacrifice; no power in his omnipotence for stooping to bear in his own person the burdens of his offspring; no privilege in all his infinite compass of prerogative for Him to know the joy of self-denial that others may be blessed and saved? For, if it be so, it were better to be a man capable of this hight and dignity which is within the reach of even the lowest of our race, than to be God shut up in such icy, loveless splendor. Or rather, what is man's little self-sacrificing but the dim, distant, broken yet unmistakable reflection of that infinite self-sacrifice which belongs in the Being of God; and which, eternally operative in that Infinite Deep, passed into its visible development and its historic revelation on Calvary? This sentiment in God, of which Christ is the expression, is the key, as it is the cause, of whatsoever remains in human nature of generosity, magnanimity, self-devoted love. Because we have such a God as we have — because our God is God in Christ, therefore do we yet in all that unbalancing of

our moral judgments and derangement of our whole spiritual nature which the Fall has wrought, count highest on the lists of human virtue the men who yield themselves for others' good. Out of the Creator this great law of self-devotion translates itself even into the poor mute language of the brute creation; so that the lower animals, sharing though they do in that wreck into which man has drawn the material world with himself, are yet transfigured in *motherhood* into what we proudly call a human, but should rather gladly own as a divine, similitude of sacrificial love. Thus this great element in God, first flooding the heavens, thence flashing its sweet celestial ray into dark places in man's heart and history, overflows also into the spheres of the lower animal life; writing from end to end of God's creation the royal signature of his Being, which is *Love*.

Now, it is according to all analogy that so majestic and so practical an element in God should have somewhere in his dispensations to man, its nucleating point, its center of developing force. Where is this historic center? If you can find in all the recorded life or imagined action of man, angel or God, a diviner self-sacrifice than Christ Jesus, *then* we will uncrown the crucified, and hail that nobler sufferer as our King and Priest. Calvary was outwardly but a low, unaspiring hill; though in spiritual fashion we count it highest toward heaven of all summits of the earth, because of its grandest, deepest sacrifice. Yet, if you will explore the world and find any spot of diviner suffering where God more visibly made Himself the Victim for his creature man,—then Calvary, precious as it is, hallowed by such memories and birthplace of such hopes as man has never elsewhere found, shall straightway be levelled, while some new and better scene of love shall rise to take its

place in men's reverence and affection, and draw to itself the tides of the human heart, the aspirations, longings, claspings, wing-beats of the human soul, while the world shall stand. But till you have found *this*, do not dare ask the world or your own heart to give up that cross which is the awfulest yet loveliest jewel on the brow of Time! If Christ quit his Cross, if there be a Christ of God without the Cross,—then there is no completely sacrificial Christ in God,—then God has faltered and shrunk from his great gift of Himself to man,—then God is less noble than man can be,—then God is not God, and man is all the god there is; and *then* behold your universe drifting helplessly into wreck with no commanding Will of Love holding the helm with its serene and perfect and patient power.

But indeed though many souls may be so blinded by the god of this world that they shall refuse to trust in a Christ who hangs upon the Cross, yet increasingly, Christ thus “lifted up,” has drawn, is drawing, shall draw the world unto Him. Not only the desperate need and danger of the human estate, but also the deepest instincts of the human heart, cry out for some sacrificial Personality of God, at once bearing man's sins in his own body on the Tree, and bringing out in clear historic light that which, as it is to us the fullest form of love, is for us the deepest fact in the Eternal God. The need and the fact of such a Saviour, man's need and God's fact, are inwrought into the profoundest, enduring beliefs of our race. More and more, as history unfolds, as the ages march, does the Cross, which is indeed man's example, but only as it is God's sacrifice, gather to itself a new and diviner lustre; century by century it rises and towers; revered at first in only the timid, tearful wonder of a few ignorant fishermen, and some score of

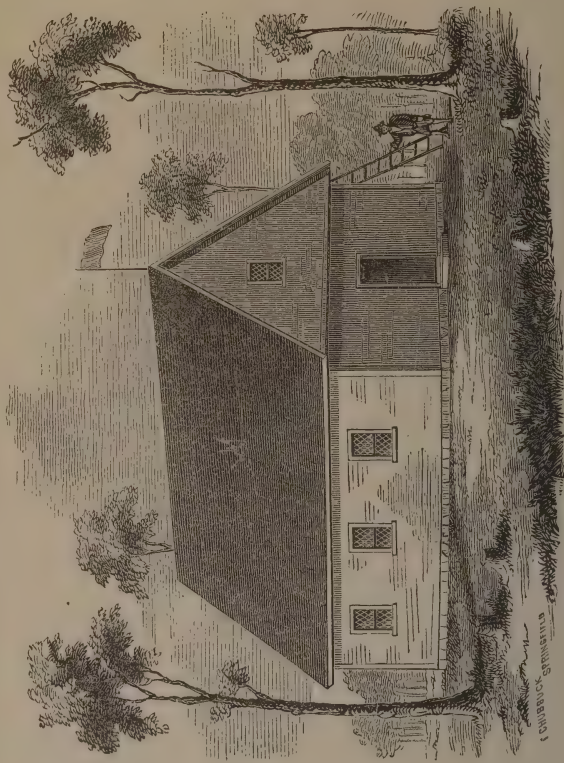
despised men and women, it has long ago moved forward to the front of human thought, and entered as the vital power into the human heart,—ordering civilizations, dominating laws and customs, winning the many Gentile nations to the brightness of the Hope of Israel, till its glad light already waxes before our eyes toward the glory of the latter day.

Consider, then, dear Brethren, whose pleasant and beautiful House of Prayer this day given to the Lord, becomes at this hour the scene of his Spirit's gift to you in the fully constituted ministry of the reconciling Word—consider that you, Minister and Flock, are standing with the whole Church of God on the earth and in the heaven, in the most positive, direct, downright, unfaltering testimony to this one central *ideal* of God, rather to this one grandest *fact* of God, in the light of whose stupendous realness every other fact of history shrinks shadowed in eclipse—“*God in the person of his Son has made upon the Cross actual though mysterious offering of Himself for man;*”—and that herein God's eternal Being and character have projected themselves in outline upon these skies of Time; so that you can point men to God *translated* in the suffering Saviour; and are to make them know by Christ what sort of god God is; and have in hand the blessed work of proclaiming in this community that there is in the Lord a full salvation out of sin waiting for men, to which you are confidently to urge and beseech them in his great name, assuring them that there is salvation in none other. This ministry of the Word among you will find all its strength in the future, as we doubt not it has found it in the past, in the holding up of the divine sacrifice for men,—thus joining in the long processional harmony of Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, whose faith has beheld the Lamb of

God amid the throne, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world; and who, inspired by that amazing vision have proclaimed Him in the good tidings of the grace of God. Be fully assured that all spiritual victory centers in the Cross, whether in your own hearts or among men to whom God sends you in the stewardship of his Gospel. Lift it up!

And are any here who have come thus far in life untouched in heart by the divine sorrow of this Christ, whom they are yet to meet glorious on his Judgment-Throne? Oh, you who are "counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing," "how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" What temptation of the devil is hindering you? Is it the wisdom of this proud and silly world that makes you ashamed of your Lord Jesus on his Cross? Or, is it self-indulgence that holds you in the refusal or neglect of a Saviour who sacrifices Himself for your salvation and calls you to follow in his steps? I charge you, "See that you refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven!" For He that was crucified shall come again in glorious majesty; then shall every one also that takes up his Cross and bears it here, counting it an honor and a joy thus to be like his Lord, be welcomed into the life everlasting. That life is real; it is near; Christ has gone before to prepare mansions for us. Wait for Him. Wait, clinging to his Cross!

APPENDIX.



FIRST CHURCH ERECTED IN SUFFIELD.
About 1680.

Extract from the Town Records, April 6, 1685:—"That the Townsmen shall upon ye townes' cost procure a ladder and alsoe a red flagg to hang out for a signe, that persons may know the time for assembling together."

APPENDIX.

STATEMENT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH EDIFICE, DECEMBER 8, 1869.

BY D. W. NORTON, CHAIRMAN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The Building Committee of this Society, now about closing the labors assigned them in the erection of their house of worship, respectfully present at this time a statement of a few facts.

The *first* meeting-house erected in this town stood upon the Common, about fifteen rods south-east of this place. It was built about the year 1680, some ten years after the first settlement in this town. By an extract from the town records, April 6, 1685, it appears, by a vote of the town of that date,—

Voted, That the Townsmen shall, upon ye Towne's cost, procure a ladder, and alsoe a red flagg, to hang out for a signe, that persons may know the time for assembling together.

This "red flagg" was used by our forefathers, as a signal to assemble for worship, until the year 1710; in that year, a drum was purchased by the town, to use for the same purpose.

Near this church, stood the *first* school-house built in Suffield. It was about sixteen by twenty feet, and six feet high, built of hewn logs, about the year 1702, some thirty-two years from the first settlements in this place. In this small house, Captain Anthony Austin, the pioneer in common schools in this town, first taught the children in Suffield to read, to write, and to cipher.

Captain Anthony Austin died, in this town, in the year 1708, and no monument to-day marks the resting-place of his remains in our cemetery. Thus we see, that nearly the first generation passed away before any school was established in the settlement.

One hundred and sixty-nine years ago, the *first* meeting-house was built, on the present site. It was forty feet square; had three entrances,—one on the north and south ends, and one on the east side, or front. It had four gables, one on each side, with a window in each gable; the roof being in the form of a pyramid, flat on the top, around which was a railing. The pulpit was on the west side, opposite the east door, over which, “with a threatening look, hangs a sounding-board.” It had two galleries, one tier above the other, the upper one being occupied by colored persons. The area in front of the galleries enabled us to look up into the interior, and view the heavy timbers of the roof, as there was no ceiling. Mr. Goodman Sykes, of Suffield, was the builder.

In this church edifice our forefathers worshiped for about fifty years, where Rev. Benjamin Ruggles, the *first* pastor, preached, and where Rev. Ebenezer Devotion and Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Gay were ordained. On a Sabbath morning, the “red flagg” was put up, or the drum was beat, to notify the people to assemble in the house of God. We see them on the way, mostly on foot, but a few, from the more distant parts, are mounted on horseback, with their loving spouses on pillions behind,—their sturdy children on foot beside them, no wheel-carriages being in use at this time.

It was from the front steps of this house, as a stand-point, that the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, during his second visit to America, preached to a large audience, gathered from this and the neighboring towns, the ladies occupying the church, while the men and boys gathered around the preacher on the Common. On this visit to America, Mr. Whitefield left Charleston, S. C., about the last of August, arriving at Newport, Sept. 14, 1740. He preached at Newport, Boston, and towns in the vicinity, for a month and then left for New Haven, stopping at the principal towns on the way.

On Sabbath, October 19, he preached twice at Northampton for Dr. Jonathan Edwards. From Monday morning, October 20, to Wednesday noon, October 22, he preached at Westfield, Springfield and Suffield; in what order cannot be told from Belcher's biography; but probably he preached at Suffield in the forenoon of Wednesday, October 22, as he preached for Rev. Timothy Edwards, at East Windsor, in the afternoon of that day. He spent the night at Mr. Edwards', and on Thursday, the 23d, he preached at Hartford in the morning and at Wethersfield in the afternoon; on Friday he preached at Middletown and Wallingford, and arrived at New Haven the same day.

Dr. Edwards accompanied Whitefield as far as East Windsor, but whether further is not known.

Whitefield's text at Suffield is not given, but an extract from his journal is quoted by Belcher, from which we learn what was his subject.

On his way to Suffield, says Belcher, he met with a minister who said, “It was not absolutely necessary for a gospel minister that he should be converted.” This gave Whitefield a subject for Suffield. “I insisted much

in my discourse," he says, "upon the doctrine of the new birth, and also the necessity of a minister being converted before he could preach the gospel aright. The word came with great power, and a great impression was made upon the people in all parts of the assembly. Many ministers were present. I did not spare them. Most of them thanked me for my plain dealing; but one was offended, and so would more of his stamp be if I were to continue longer in New England; for unconverted ministers are the bane of the Christian church."

Rev. Ebenezer Devotion was pastor of the church at Suffield at the time that Whitefield preached there, Mr. D. having died, April 11, 1741. A great revival was enjoyed at Suffield soon after Whitefield's preaching, more than two hundred persons having been received into the church in the years 1741 and 1742.*

The *second* meeting-house on this site was raised May 3, 1749. It was forty by fifty-seven feet, facing the east. It had three doors, — one on the east, north, and south sides. The steeple was on the north end. Its interior was similar to its predecessor, except that it had but one tier of galleries, and a ceiling in the audience-room. The pulpit on the west side, with a sounding-board overhead. In 1760, the Society voted to purchase a bell, to take the place of the flag or drum, and it was brought into the town in November, 1761. In the year 1786, this steeple was taken down, and a tower and spire built from the ground, one hundred and thirty feet high, at the north end of the church, well-built and symmetrical. It had a bell and clock tower, and in it a fine-toned bell was hung, and a town-clock placed, with two large and distinct faces. Master Joseph Howard, of Suffield, was the designer and builder.

This house, with its tower and spire, was taken down in March, 1835; but the tower and spire ought to have been preserved for the church about to be built.† Its successor, being the *third* meeting-house occupying the present site, was erected the same year. It was about fifty-one by seventy-two feet, of the Grecian-Doric order, with entrances of two doors at the east end of the edifice. The east end was finished with a Grecian portico, with a beautiful tower of the same order, about eighty-eight feet high, surmounted with a balustrade. The pulpit was at the west end, and galleries on three sides of the house. It was built under the supervision of Deacon Henry A. Sykes, of Suffield, at a cost of about eight thousand dollars.

About three years ago, this house having become dilapidated, and needing extensive repairs, beside an insufficient number of seats to accommodate the members of the Society, as two and three families, in some

* This account of Mr. Whitefield's visit was kindly furnished by Rev. Henry Robinson, of Guilford.

† It was in this church that the faithful Titus Kent, born in bondage, but who never felt the galling chains of slavery, performed the duties of sexton for some twenty years; and his remains now sleep in our cemetery, without a stone to mark his resting-place.

instances, occupied the same slip, the question arose, What should be done to meet our wants? repair or build? After several months' deliberation, some were decidedly in favor of repairing, while it was claimed by others, especially the middle-aged and young men, as so many repairs were needed, and the seats could not accommodate all who wished to attend, and the spirit of the age in which we were living demanded of us (we being the oldest Society in the town) the erection of a new and better house of worship. This Society, at a legal meeting held in their meeting-house February 25, 1867, voted not to make extensive repairs on the church, but to repair the roof.

At a meeting held October 14, 1867, it was voted to appoint a special committee, consisting of seven persons, to procure estimates for the repair of the present house, and also for the erection of a new house of worship. The members of this committee were Byron Loomis, George A. Douglas, Silas W. Clark, Charles F. Loomis, Henry King, Timothy Granger, and Doctor C. W. Kellogg. This committee reported, on the 4th of November following, that a majority were in favor of building a new house, and a committee was then appointed to procure subscriptions for that purpose.

On the 13th of January, 1868, at the annual meeting of this Society, it was voted to build a new house of worship, and that a committee of twelve persons be appointed to carry out said object. This committee, by a vote of the Society, was afterward increased to fifteen persons. The expense of a new house was not to exceed forty thousand dollars, nor less in cost than thirty thousand dollars. The names of this committee were Daniel W. Norton, George A. Douglas, Burdett Loomis, Charles F. Loomis, Byron Loomis, George Fuller, William G. Ballentine, Albert Austin, Silas W. Clark, John W. Loomis, Nathan Clark, Timothy Granger, William L. Loomis, Hiram K. Granger, and Henry King.

The old meeting-house was removed in June, 1868, and preparations for the foundation of the new house commenced. On the 20th of August, 1868, the corner-stone of the new church was laid, with appropriate and religious services. As the work progressed on our church, it was found that the sum subscribed would be insufficient to complete it. At the annual meeting of this Society, held on the 11th of January, 1869, the Building Committee reported that the sum then subscribed was thirty-three thousand seven hundred and five dollars. Whereupon, by the recommendation of this committee, it was voted that the Building Committee and the treasurer of this Society are hereby authorized to negotiate a loan sufficient to enable them to complete the said house of worship. This was consummated.

At a special meeting of this Society, held March 4, 1869, it was voted that a committee of six persons be appointed to purchase a bell, organ, and the necessary furniture for the new church. The names of this committee were Daniel W. Norton, Albert Austin, Burdett Loomis,

William L. Loomis, George A. Douglas, and Charles F. Loomis. It was also voted that this committee be and are hereby instructed to invite the ladies connected with this Society to furnish the carpets, cushions, and furniture that would be needed for the new house when completed.

At a meeting held October 15, 1869, this Society voted, that our new church should be paid for before it was dedicated.

At an adjourned meeting of this Society, held November 1, 1869, it was voted, by the report of their committee, that the additional sum of about twenty-eight thousand dollars would be needed to complete said house and provide means for the payment of their loan; therefore,

Resolved, That this Society authorize and recommend that a subscription be solicited to raise funds for this needed amount;

—which was adopted, and a committee of four persons appointed for that purpose. The names of this committee were Dr. Aretas Rising, Albert Austin, Burdett Loomis, and Nathan Clark. This committee presented the subscription at our meeting, and over twenty thousand dollars was raised at that time; most of the Building Committee and other members of the Society coming forward in this noble cause, and doubling their subscription, or nearly so, which was reported at a meeting held by this Society November 6, 1869.

The dimensions of this new church edifice, as it stands upon the ground, are sixty-four by ninety-two feet; including the chapel, sixty-four by one hundred and thirty-five feet. It has three entrances,—two on the east and one on the south side,—each leading into the vestibule. The tower is situated at the south-east corner; its base is about twenty-two feet square,—a clock and bell tower,—the whole surmounted with a spire whose entire height is one hundred and seventy feet.

The chapel tower is situated at the north-east corner. Its base is about sixteen feet square, and the entire height about ninety feet, surmounted with an iron balustrade.

The walls of this church are built of brick, with Portland-stone trimmings. The roof and spire are covered with slate.

The audience-room is sixty by seventy-six feet; has two side and a choir-gallery at the south end, and opposite the latter is the pulpit at the north end of the church.

The lecture room in the chapel is thirty-eight by fifty feet. In the second story of the chapel is the ladies' parlor, twenty-eight by thirty-four feet; pastor's study, eighteen by twenty-four feet; ladies' kitchen, ten by sixteen feet.

The interior finish of the church is of chestnut and black-walnut woods, oiled. The walls and ceiling are frescoed; windows of stained glass.

Built after the Romanesque style of architecture; Mr. John Mead, of Suffield, architect and builder.

The Building Committee, at this time, desire to express their sincere thanks to Mr. John Mead, the architect and builder; also, to Messrs. Byron Loomis, Burdett Loomis, Charles F. Loomis, Nathan Clark, and Timothy Granger, the sub-committee, for their faithful and laborious services in the erection of this church edifice as the house of God.

The whole amount expended by your committee in the erection of this edifice, for excavation, grading the grounds, flagging-stone, and bell, ...	\$60,661 89
Furnishing the same, including the organ, ...	7,675 43
	\$68,337 32

The ladies of this Society, for carpets, cushions, lamps, &c., furnished the sum of	\$2,177 40
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The amount received from the sale of the old church and chapel, ...	\$3,500 00
Expense of removing church and chapel, ...	1,754 56
	Net, 1,745 44
	\$66,591 88

In this connection, and at this time, we desire to speak of several donations:—A handsomely bound Bible (English edition), presented by Edwin D. Morgan, Jr., of New-York City; three Elizabethan chairs, for the pulpit platform, presented by Mrs. Burdett Loomis; a small marble-top stand, by Mrs. Charles A. Chapman; appropriate mottoes and texts for Sabbath-school room and chapel, by Mrs. Byron Loomis.

This house being now finished, and about to be dedicated to the service of Almighty God, but one thing remains yet to be done. In behalf of the Building Committee of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Suffield, I now present to you, Sir, chairman of the Society's Committee,

THE KEYS OF THIS CHURCH EDIFICE.

May unity, peace, and harmony pervade all your councils, for the prosperity and up-building of the cause of the Redeemer in this place; and may the blessing of God crown your efforts!

(RESPONSE BY H. K. FORD, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE.

As chairman of the Society's Committee, and in behalf of the First Ecclesiastical Society, I receive from your hands, Sir, chairman of the Building Committee, the keys of this beautiful church edifice, which we this day unite, with the Council assembled, in dedicating.

The Society's Committee would tender to you personally,—and, through you, to the sub-committee, whose duties have been laborious, but faithfully performed to the end,—their heartfelt thanks.

This Society appreciate your generous work; and long may we live in unity, and enjoy, by the blessing of God, the fruits of your labor!

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